

ARKANSAS
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Post - Adoption Needs of Adopted Children and Their Families

Community Support Section—Adoptions Services Unit
Legislative Research, Planning and Analysis—Planning Unit

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Executive Summary

The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) conducted a survey to gain information about services for adoptive children and families. This report reflects the results of the survey, analysis of the data, and recommendations for change.

The survey instrument was a questionnaire developed by the DCFS Adoptions Unit. The survey questions focused on services needed; services utilized; problems accessing services; and suggestions for improvements. The survey instrument included frequency rating scales and open-ended questions. The survey was mailed to 750 families receiving adoption subsidy through DCFS. The response rate to the survey was 35%.

The survey inquired about thirteen difference service need areas. The five most frequently identified service needs reported by the survey respondents included: special education programs; after school or summer activities; day care or after school care; medical services; and family counseling.

The questionnaire inquired about the level of utilization for the same thirteen service need areas. The five most frequently identified services used by the survey respondents included: money, after school or summer activities; day care or after school care; medical services; and other monetary assistance.

Twelve different service access problems were presented to the survey participants for response. The respondents identified three areas that have been problematic in accessing services: knowledge of service availability; location of services; and lack of understanding of problems by service providers.

Responses from the survey participants to the open-ended questions concerning problems faced by the adoptive child included: adjustment to adoption; health and mental health problems; school, learning, and peer pressure problems.

Suggestions from the survey respondents for improved services for adoptive children and families included: more information about available services; post-adoption services; support groups; improved services from DCFS; and more information about the child.

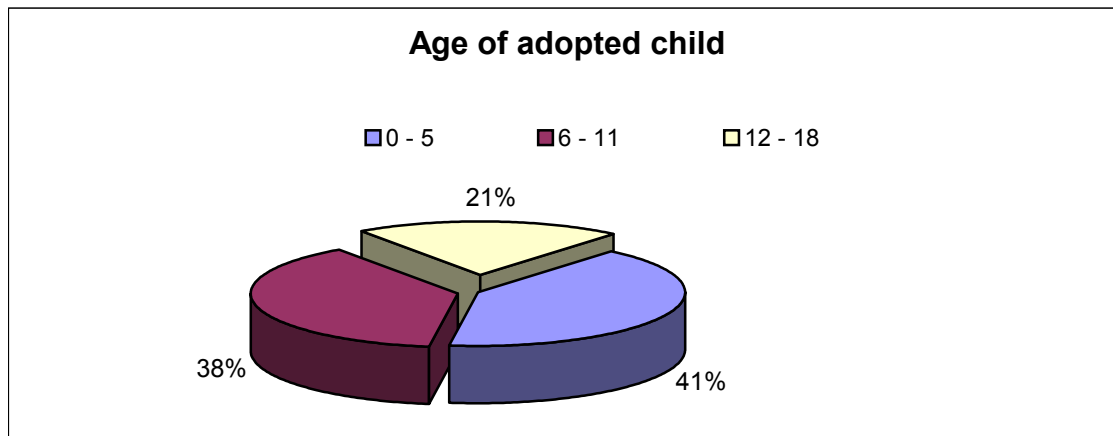
DCFS will use the results of this survey to determine the feasibility of developing or increasing services for adoptive families and for children prior to and after adoption placement. Efforts to improve services to adoptive families will include increased sharing of information about available services; increased focus on the child's preparation for adoption; and increased focus on the adoptive family's preparation for the child's response to adoption.

ADOPTION NEEDS

Adoption Services

Many children are removed from their birth family or legal parent due to neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and/or sexual abuse. The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) works with the birth family to resolve problems. Some the children's parents have consented to the children being adopted and the Division and the court have agreed. Other parents have not consented. In such cases, the Division and the court have determined it is not safe for the child to live with the parent or other family members. Older, handicapped, minority, and abused or neglected children need loving persons to adopt them. DCFS helps by providing a full range of adoption services, from finding families to adopt a child, to keeping a voluntary adoption registry. Services are also available to birth parents who chose to place their newborns for adoption.

In State Fiscal Year 2001, 398 children were placed in adoptive homes. Of the 398 children adopted, 183 or 46% were male and 209 or 54% were female and 140 or 35% were African-American, 248 or 65% were white with 4 children as other.



There were 293 (74%) of the children identified with special needs. Some of these children were identified with multiple needs that included medical, emotional, learning problems and those children in a sibling group.

Study Objective

This study was undertaken in order to learn more about how families adopting children progress after the adoption. The focus of the study was to request input from adoptive families who were receiving an adoption subsidy. As part of the 2001 Angela R. Compliance Plan, the Adoptions Unit worked on Goal 3: Accelerate the achievement of permanency for children in foster care. This goal includes strategy 1: Expand adoption recruitment and post-adoption support. From this strategy was the task to assess the adequacy of current post adoption services and resources.

Survey Design

The Adoptions Unit mailed out a survey to all families receiving an adoption subsidy asking them to identify any service needs for their adopted child or for their families. The results of the input on returned surveys will assist in developing and targeting services most needed by these families. A total of 750 surveys were mailed and 262 (35%) adoptive families responded to the survey.

The survey contains questions asking for ratings and open-ended questions such as:

- Information about services that the child may need
- Identifying services that the adopted child received in the last year
- Input on how the adoption assistance monies or services from DCFS were helpful to the family.
- Identification of any problem families was experiencing with the services for the adopted child.
- How to improve these services

Respondents were asked to identify specific services needed for adopted children in their care. Using a “Likert Scale” that describes the frequency with a 5, indicating the child needs the service most of the time or a 1, indicating the child rarely or does not need the service. The responses are described in the following manner.

5. Most or all of the time
4. A good part of the time
3. Some of the time
2. A little of the time
1. Rarely or none of the time

Survey Results

Service Needs

The first series of questions asked, **“What does your child need?”** The respondents identified the services needs as follows.

Does your child need Special Education Programs?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	71	27
A good part of the time	30	11
Some of the time	20	8
A little of the time	17	6
Rarely or none of the time	122	46
N/A	1	.4
Missing or did not answer	3	1

Does your child need Medical Services (beyond ordinary well-child care)?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	38	14
A good part of the time	42	16
Some of the time	51	19
A little of the time	33	13
Rarely or none of the time	97	36
Missing or did not answer	1	.2

Does your child need handicapped aids – such as wheelchairs, hearing aids, etc.

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	17	6
A good part of the time	5	2
Some of the time	2	.8
A little of the time	7	3
Rarely or none of the time	228	86
N/A	1	.4
Missing or did not answer	5	2

Does your child need money – other than the monthly subsidy from DCFS?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	30	11
A good part of the time	32	12
Some of the time	37	13
A little of the time	21	8
Rarely or none of the time	137	53
N/A	1	.4
Missing or did not answer	7	3

Does your child need a group of other adopted children to talk with?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	13	5
A good part of the time	16	6
Some of the time	33	12
A little of the time	34	13
Rarely or none of the time	160	60
N/A	1	.4
Missing or did not answer	8	3

Does your child need family counseling (counseling for parents and child together)?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	32	12
A good part of the time	12	5
Some of the time	47	17
A little of the time	33	13
Rarely or none of the time	133	51
N/A	1	.4
Missing or did not answer	6	2

Does your child need respite care (someone to care for your adopted child so the parents can get away)?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	21	8
A good part of the time	17	6
Some of the time	41	16
A little of the time	19	7
Rarely or none of the time	163	61
N/A	1	.4
Missing or did not answer	3	1

Does your child need outpatient mental health services?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	31	12
A good part of the time	16	6
Some of the time	27	10
A little of the time	19	7
Rarely or none of the time	164	62
N/A	2	.8
Missing or did not answer	6	2

Does your child need inpatient mental health services?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	12	7
A good part of the time	2	.8

Some of the time	9	3
A little of the time	19	7
Rarely or none of the time	215	81
N/A	1	.4
Missing or did not answer	3	1

Does your child need substance abuse help (alcohol or drugs)?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	4	2
A good part of the time	2	.8
Some of the time	6	2
A little of the time	5	2
Rarely or none of the time	237	89
N/A	3	.1
Missing or did not answer	8	4

Does your child need legal help (not counting getting the child adopted)?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	10	4
A good part of the time	6	2
Some of the time	14	5
A little of the time	9	3
Rarely or none of the time	219	83
N/A	1	.4
Missing or did not answer	6	2

Does your child need day care or after-school care?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	48	18
A good part of the time	16	6
Some of the time	29	11
A little of the time	13	5
Rarely or none of the time	151	57
Missing or did not answer	8	3

Does your child need things for the child to do after school or in the summer (sports, clubs etc.)

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	53	20
A good part of the time	41	16
Some of the time	55	20
A little of the time	15	6
Rarely or none of the time	93	34
N/A	1	.4
Missing or did not answer	7	3

Summary of Survey Question, “What does your child need?”

The top five service needs identified by the respondents are as follows:

1. Special Education Programs
2. After school or in the summer (sports, clubs etc.) activities
3. Day care or after-school care
4. Medical Services (beyond ordinary well-child care)
5. Family counseling (counseling for parents and child together)

Service Utilization

The second set of questions asked families to identify what services they used in the last year to provide care for the adopted child.

Did you use Special Education Programs?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	67	25
A good part of the time	20	8
Some of the time	16	6
A little of the time	12	5
Rarely or none of the time	141	53
N/A	1	.4
Missing or did not answer	8	2

Did you use Medical Services (beyond ordinary well-child care)?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	39	15
A good part of the time	35	13
Some of the time	44	17
A little of the time	36	14
Rarely or none of the time	104	39
Missing or did not answer	7	2

Did you use handicapped aids – such as wheelchairs, hearing aids, etc.?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	11	4
A good part of the time	7	3
Some of the time	3	1
A little of the time	4	2
Rarely or none of the time	230	86
N/A	1	.4
Missing or did not answer	9	3

Did you use money – other than the monthly subsidy from DCFS?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	32	12
A good part of the time	21	8
Some of the time	25	9
A little of the time	12	5
Rarely or none of the time	163	61
Missing or did not answer	12	5

Did you or your adopted child have access to a group of other adopted children to talk with?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	5	2
A good part of the time	4	2
Some of the time	16	6
A little of the time	16	6
Rarely or none of the time	214	80
Missing or did not answer	10	4

Did you use family counseling (counseling for parents and child together)?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	26	10
A good part of the time	10	4
Some of the time	26	10
A little of the time	26	10
Rarely or none of the time	168	63
Missing or did not answer	9	3

Did you use respite care (someone to care for your adopted child so the parents can get away)?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	9	3
A good part of the time	4	2
Some of the time	14	5
A little of the time	20	8
Rarely or none of the time	210	79
Missing or did not answer	8	3

For your adopted child, did you use any outpatient mental health services?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	23	10
A good part of the time	19	6
Some of the time	23	10
A little of the time	7	2
Rarely or none of the time	164	68
N/A	2	.8
Missing or did not answer	6	2

For your adopted child, did you use any inpatient mental health services?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	9	3
A good part of the time	4	2
Some of the time	3	1
A little of the time	4	2
Rarely or none of the time	255	87
N/A	2	.8
Missing or did not answer	10	4

For your adopted child, did you use any substance abuse help (alcohol or drugs)?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	5	2
A good part of the time	4	1
Some of the time	1	.1
A little of the time	1	.1
Rarely or none of the time	242	91
N/A	3	1
Missing or did not answer	11	4

For your adopted child, did you use any legal help (not counting getting the child adopted)?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	6	2
A good part of the time	3	1
Some of the time	6	2
A little of the time	10	4
Rarely or none of the time	229	87
N/A	3	.1
Missing or did not answer	9	3

For your adopted child, did you use any day care or after-school care?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	31	12
A good part of the time	11	4
Some of the time	18	6
A little of the time	11	4
Rarely or none of the time	183	69
N/A	1	.4
Missing or did not answer	10	4

For your adopted child, did you have your child involved in after school or summer (sports, clubs etc.) activities?

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	32	12
A good part of the time	24	9
Some of the time	39	14
A little of the time	19	7
Rarely or none of the time	137	52
N/A	1	.4
Missing or did not answer	13	5

Summary of Survey Question what services they used in the last year to provide care for the adopted child.

The top five services used as identified by the respondents are:

1. Money
2. After school or summer activities
3. Day care or after school care
4. Medical services
5. Other monetary assistance

Service Problems

Respondents were asked to rate, “what problems have you had with services for your adopted child?”

My child won’t go to counseling.

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	9	3
A good part of the time	11	4
Some of the time	8	3
A little of the time	19	7
Rarely or none of the time	215	81
N/A	1	.4
Missing or did not answer	3	1

The available services are offered by a religious group other than my own.

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	5	2
A good part of the time	4	2
Some of the time	11	4
A little of the time	8	3
Rarely or none of the time	202	75
N/A	10	4
Missing or did not answer	25	10

There are racial or ethnic problems with the services available.

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	3	1
A good part of the time	1	.4
Some of the time	4	2
A little of the time	5	2
Rarely or none of the time	219	93
N/A	1	.4
Missing or did not answer	3	1

Transportation is a problem.

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	8	2
A good part of the time	10	3
Some of the time	11	4
A little of the time	7	3
Rarely or none of the time	210	79
N/A	7	3
Missing or did not answer	17	6

Services are not available at the right time.

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	17	6
A good part of the time	8	3
Some of the time	26	10
A little of the time	14	5
Rarely or none of the time	165	63
N/A	8	3
Missing or did not answer	27	10

My family won't go for counseling.

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	6	2
A good part of the time	4	2
Some of the time	6	2
A little of the time	6	2
Rarely or none of the time	207	78
N/A	10	4
Missing or did not answer	26	10

I don't know what services are available to me.

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	45	16
A good part of the time	31	12
Some of the time	21	8
A little of the time	26	10
Rarely or none of the time	112	42
N/A	7	3
Missing or did not answer	23	9

I don't know where the right service is located.

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	40	15
A good part of the time	26	10
Some of the time	18	7
A little of the time	14	5
Rarely or none of the time	133	50
N/A	7	3
Missing or did not answer	27	10

The people who were supposed to help don't understand our problems.

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	30	11
A good part of the time	14	5
Some of the time	21	8
A little of the time	10	4
Rarely or none of the time	152	57
N/A	8	3
Missing or did not answer	30	11

I have too many other things, which I already must do.

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	6	2
A good part of the time	4	2
Some of the time	21	8
A little of the time	28	11
Rarely or none of the time	167	63
N/A	9	3
Missing or did not answer	30	11

I don't have confidence in the people who are supposed to help me.

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	19	7
A good part of the time	16	6
Some of the time	15	6
A little of the time	25	9
Rarely or none of the time	149	56
N/A	7	3
Missing or did not answer	34	13

My adopted child's needs are so special that I can't find the right service.

	Frequency	Percent
Most or all of the time	18	7
A good part of the time	9	3
Some of the time	15	6
A little of the time	10	4
Rarely or none of the time	173	65
N/A	8	3
Missing or did not answer	32	12

Summary of survey responses to “What problems have you had. . .” and the top three (3) service deficiencies identified by the respondents are as follows:

1. Knowledge of service availability
2. Location of services, these are not located close to the family.
3. Counselors currently serving child do not understand the problem

General Issues

The next series of questions are open-ended and respondents were asked for their opinions.

From your child's point of view what are the biggest problems faced by your child? The analysis revealed three (3)-recurring themes among the responses. Adoptive parents' responses are quoted to provide examples of non-biased responses.

1. Finding understanding, fitting in, achieving feelings of permanency or wanting to be with the biological parent – being an adopted child, feelings of being the odd person in this new family and with their peers.
 - “That I am not her mother, that I do not understand and she does not understand about her mother.”
 - “Coming to terms with the loss of her birth mother and other relatives.”
 - “Not fully understanding why he was given up for adoption.”
 - “She cannot accept us as her family.”
 - “Adjustment to family situations, between biological family abuse and foster care (for too long) he doesn't know what a real family should be, doesn't accept my parental authority.”

- “He did not get a life book. He now wants pictures of his parents and siblings and other information.”
 - “My oldest adopted son is ten. He has been with us for 3 1/2 years. He still has major problems dealing with the Bio Mom leaving him.”
 - “Realizing he has a "Forever Here" that he will be loved and cared for.”
2. Child is experiencing health, mental health and emotional problems.
 - “Learning to leave behind the anger and aggressive behavior and deal with life’s disappointments in a more healthy way.”
 - “Dealing with her emotions, sleep disorders, and obsessive compulsive disorders.”
 - “Not knowing where his brothers and sister are and if they are ok.”
 - “Dealing with sexual abuse by birth parent.”
 - “Physical health challenges which limit his ability to participate fully.”
 - “Her asthma, and her skin disorder.”
 - “Medical care received out of state is not covered.”
 - “Dealing with the past; self esteem; learning disabilities.”
 - “Attachment Disorder & ADD.”
 - “ADHD problems, oppositional defiant disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder.”
 3. Child is experiencing school difficulty, learning disabilities and or peer pressures.
 - “She is 9 years old can't read, she is in special education classes at school she takes Ritalin. It is very hard for her to learn.”
 - “Learning to read at school.”
 - “School dealing with his bipolar.”
 - “School (just having to go to school) typical complaints.”
 - “Keeping up with peers, academically and physically (small for age and has trouble with reading which affects all school work).”
 - “Being behind in her learning skills, child was in a home where she was not learning.”
 - “Needs special education classes and extra help with schoolwork.”
 - “Peer pressure to drink, sex "fitting in with the crowd".

What are you and your child doing to solve this problem? Following are common responses (as identified above)with specific examples:

1. Nurturing the child.
 - “Letting him know that he is loved and cared for.”
 - “Natural consequences, lots of talking and hugging.”
2. Spending more time with the child.
 - “We go shopping together, ball games, church and sometimes a weekend trip.”
3. Allowing the child to talk about the problem(s).
 - “Allowing her to talk and ask questions. Reassuring her that she won't lose this family.”
4. Seeing that the child gets the medical care needed.
 - “Keeping her under the care of the doctor and specialist for skin disorders.”

5. Advocating for the child.
 - “Looking into changing DCFS' regulations to include last year of high school or taking a job her last year of school.”
6. Making sure the child gets the educational services needed.
 - “Working closely with the school and being home when she gets home from school.”
7. Attending family counseling or individual counseling needed.
 - “We go to family counseling and one on one.”
8. Getting child involved in school or community activities.
 - “Mother is involved in school activities and many times eats lunch at school to meet child's peers, and get them involved with child, we have classmates come to our home, have child attend birthday parties for peers.”

Overall, how satisfied are you with the services you have received for your adopted child?

80% of the respondents indicated they were very satisfied with the services received.

18% indicated that they were not satisfied with the services they received.

2% indicated that they were 50/50.

Examples of specific responses are as follows:

- “Very satisfied and surprised to find out there is someone that will help after the adoption.”
- “Wish more services were available (i.e. local assistance with counseling, respite).”
- “I'm not completely satisfied/I haven't received a Medicaid card for my son and its been a year.”
- “Not at all. It has been a constant fight to find suitable help for a child with behavior problems.”
- “Extremely helpful and good for the welfare of the child.”
- “There has NEVER been any respite care available. This is an urgent need.”

If you received adoption assistance monies or services from DCFS in the past 12 months, how helpful were these to your family?

1. 96% of the respondents indicated that the money was very helpful and gave the following examples:

- “Very helpful. It allows for the child (and other children) to have a decent quality of living.”
- “Very helpful helped with child's extra curricular activities and DR's visits. Not everyone takes the Medicare (Medicaid).”
- “It was of great help in paying for trips to medical services.”
- “Greatly appreciated especially for all the therapy and programs.”
- “Very useful. \$ were put in bank for our child's college fund.”
- “Very much a big help. It helps get him new books to read, clothes, help take him on a better vacation. All sorts of things.”
- “Very - also the Medicaid is a lifesaver!!

- “Very helpful, really helpful in buying clothing, books and school supplies and paying for school day care.”
 - “Could not have adopted children without help--especially a special needs child.”
2. 4% either did not get the assistance, it was reduced or discontinued.
- “They stopped last year and it’s hard to get by.”
 - “Very needful and hurt when the check was cut by \$30 a month because they said child did not qualify, even though child's disability had increased.”

Suggestions For Change

Respondents were asked to provide suggestions on how to improve services for adopted children and their families. Here are some examples:

1. 25% of the respondents wanted to know what services are available.
 - “Make services available and known what they are entitled to.”
 - “Make sure that each family knows that there are services out there when a need arises.”
 - “Newsletters with available services would help find services we are not aware of.”
2. 22% of the respondents indicated that they need some type of post adoption services.
 - “Caseworker needs to visit more often before child is waiting to be adopted.”
 - “Adoptive families need a caseworker even after an adoption is finalized to help answer questions and access resources.”
 - “Just keep in touch with us and keep letting us know that help is there for us and our children as they get older and their bodies change and we see what they may need.”
3. 19% of the respondents indicated that they needed a support group for themselves and/or their adopted child to talk with.
 - “Local support groups for parents and children, post-adoptive follow-up by DHS (similar to pre-adoption weekly and monthly visits.”
 - “It would be nice to get with other adoptive parents, and our children with other adopted children.”
 - “Make a list of available services to give with adoption packet.”
4. 14% of the respondents indicated a problem with the agency.
 - “More follow-up from DHS (maybe once a year)”
 - “Reduce worker's caseload--look @ & revise paperwork!!! The paperwork was a nightmare. Teach 3 hr class for adoptive families separated from foster--LITTLE info was presented on adoption!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!”
 - “I think your section needs to be honest with what is policy and what is standard procedures in adoption.”
5. 10% of the respondents indicated that they needed more information about the child being adopted.
 - “Let the adoptive family know as much as possible about medical conditions of parents or their family members.”

- “Give families more information about the child before the adoption is final.”
 - “We should have been given more background info and more help when the expected problems surfaced.”
 - “Better background search on original parents of the adopted child. Learning disabilities program complication, smoking, alcohol, and other drugs.”
6. 10% of the respondents could not be categorized and are listed as other.
- “Need increase in payment, more mental health services.”
 - “Direct deposit for subsidy.”
 - Respite care. A group home available on demand would be helpful. We are threatened daily
 - “When a child is first placed in a home I think a clothing voucher or something to that nature. Should be given car seats if needed also.”
 - “Need Medicaid for child who has reached 18 but is still in school.”

Respondents were invited to provide additional comments. The analysis revealed these repeated themes:

- Services and Medicaid a problem, specifically for the child that is over 18.
- A need for support groups
- Identified several service needs
- Mental Health Care was a problem
- Adoptive parents identified a couple of school issues
- Paperwork and DHS problems were also identified.

Examples of specific responses:

“The new support group is a good way. Just knowing you can have some one to listen at a minute’s notice that has been there before. Someone to say its ok and normal to have days when you wonder how you ever considered adoption.”

“Problems understanding support agencies for children with learning disabilities”

“Thanks for caring enough to ask.”

“It would be a GREAT idea if adopted children could attend an Arkansas college or university at no cost. This would help take the huge financial burden off the family I have spoken to my state rep about this very idea.”

Recommendations

1. DCFS will review these top five service needs identified by the respondents and determine the feasibility of providing all or part these as post adoption services.
 - Special Education Programs
 - After school or in the summer (sports, clubs etc.) activities
 - Day care or after-school care
 - Medical Services (beyond ordinary well-child care)
 - Family counseling (counseling for parents and child together)
2. Offer adoptive families the ability to direct deposit the adoption subsidy.
3. When asked the question about the biggest problems faced by your child, the most repeated comment was the child's role in the family, their feelings on being adopted, or feeling they have a lack of security. Consider exploring this and determining what kinds of supports and services can be provided to the adopted child and their family. Consideration of enhancing assessment and counseling services for foster children prior to adoption placement.
4. Review current training for adoptive families. Add segment to the Foster/Adopt Pride training regarding issues around adoptive children and their feelings about being an adoptive child. Consider using Adoption Specialist and/or current adoptive parents to share life experiences of the adoption processes.
5. Create a newsletter to include a space for Area news to include information about the adoption process, contact information, location of support groups, and other topics of interest etc.
6. Providing families with more knowledge of service availability, location of services and accessibility of services. Local county office or Area could provide an information-sharing meeting to discuss available services.
7. Establish or re-establish support groups in each area.
8. Require thorough and complete histories on child prior to selecting a family. Provide this to the prospective adoptive family. Review current paperwork requirements to determine that the work is done timely.
9. Provide post-adoption support and services to adoptive families.
10. As some of the questions were very broad, suggest a follow-up interview be conducted to determine the specific needs of adoptive families and their child.

Appendix

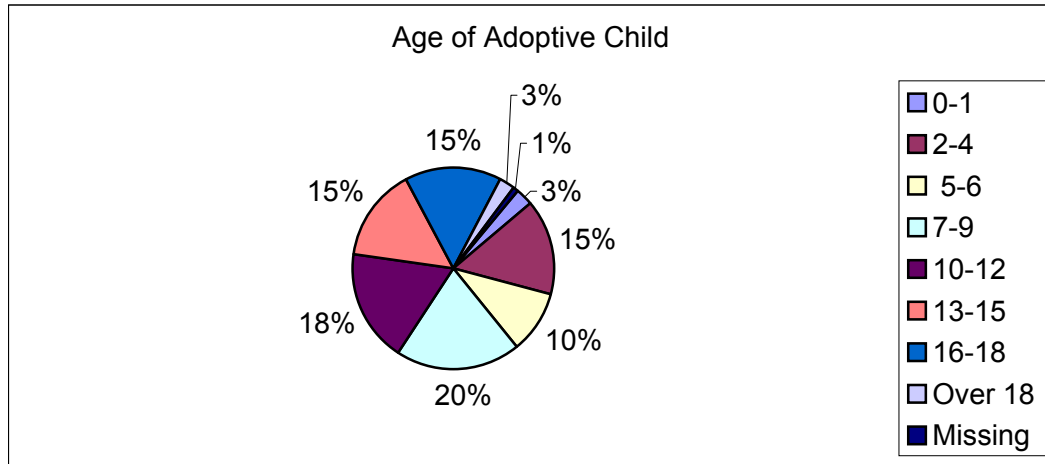
Demographic Information on the Adopted Children

Demographic Information on the Adoptive Family Respondents

Survey Instrument

Letter to Participants

INFORMATION ON THE ADOPTED CHILDREN



<u>Age</u>	Frequency	Percent	<u>Child's Gender</u>	Frequency	Percent
0-1	7	3	Female	125	47
2-4	41	16	Male	137	52
5-6	26	10	Missing	3	.8
7-9	53	20			
10-12	48	18			
13-15	40	15			
16-18	41	15			
Over 18	7	3			
Missing	2	.8			

Race

	Frequency	Percent
Black	83	31
Native American	6	2
White	155	59
Other	13	5
Hispanic	7	3
Missing or did not answer	1	.4

Religious affiliation of child

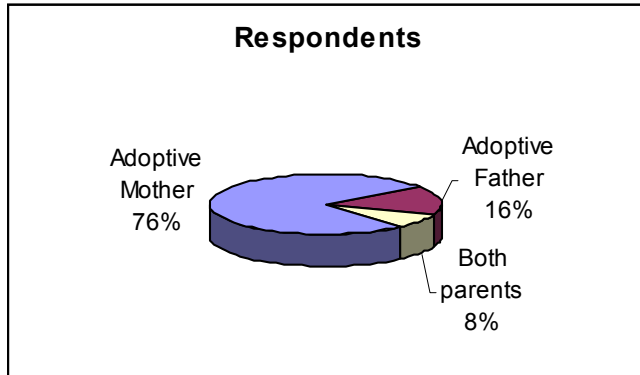
	Frequency	Percent
Catholic	13	5
Protestant	204	77
Other	18	4
None	28	11
Missing	9	3

Total number of children identified with a disability

Frequency	Percent
108	41
109	

INFORMATION ABOUT THE ADOPTIVE PARENTS

<u>Who completed the survey?</u>	Frequency	Percent
Adoptive mother	201	76
Adoptive father	41	16
Both the adoptive mother and father	21	8



Age of the Respondent

Median age of the respondent is 45 years old.

Race of the respondent is

	Frequency	Percent
Asian	2	.8
Black	76	29
Native American	6	2
White	174	66
Other	5	2
Hispanic	1	.4
Missing or did not answer	1	.4

<u>Religious affiliation of parent</u>	Frequency	Percent
Catholic	15	6
Protestant	223	84
Other	10	4
None	15	5
Missing	2	.8

Current marital status

	Frequency	Percent
Married only once	162	61
Married more than once	60	23
Divorced	15	6
Never married	14	5
Other	13	4
Missing	1	.4

Living in the household

	Frequency	Percent
1	1	.4
2	21	8
3	76	29
4	71	27
5	45	17
6	15	6
7	19	7
8	7	3
9	3	1
10	3	1
12	1	.4
Missing	3	1

Number of children under age 18

	Frequency	Percent
Under 1	8	3
1	77	29
2	80	30
3	36	14
4	18	7
5	17	6
6	8	3
7	2	.8
8	3	1
10	1	.1
Missing	15	6

Educational status of adoptive parent

	Frequency	Percent
Less than high school	22	8
High school	109	41
Associates degree/14 yrs	55	21
Bachelors Degree	47	17
Master's Degree	20	8
Ph.D.	4	2
Missing	8	3

STATE OF ARKANSAS

DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

ADOPTION SERVICES UNIT

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE NEEDS OF POST ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

Even though your adoption has been finalized, the staff of DCFS is still interested in making your placement a successful one. In an effort to help you and your family with the special needs of your adopted child, please carefully review and complete this questionnaire. We will be using your input to develop and target those services most needed by the families of special needs children.

IF YOU HAVE ADOPTED MORE THAN ONE CHILD, ANSWER THE QUESTIONS FOR ONLY ONE CHILD, CHOOSING THE CHILD THAT REQUIRES THE MOST SERVICES.

1. WHAT DOES YOUR CHILD NEED? These items are about the specific services needed by your child. Answer each item as carefully and accurately as you can by placing a number beside each one as follows:

1. Rarely or none of the time
2. A little of the time
3. Some of the time
4. A good part of the time
5. Most or all of the time

1. Special Education Programs _____
2. Medical Services (beyond ordinary well-child care) _____
3. Handicapped aids-like wheelchairs, hearing aids, etc. _____
4. Money-other than the monthly subsidy from DCFS _____
5. A group of other adopted children to talk with _____
6. Family counseling (counseling for parents and child together) _____
7. Respite care (someone to care for your adopted child so the
parents can get away) _____
8. Outpatient mental health services _____
9. Inpatient mental health services _____
10. Substance abuse help (alcohol or drugs) _____

PLACE A NUMBER BESIDE EACH ONE:

11. Legal help (not counting getting the child adopted) _____
12. Day care or after-school care _____
13. Things for the child to do after school or in the
summer (sports, clubs, etc) _____

14. Other (please specify) _____

15. From your child's point of view, what are the biggest problems faced by your child _____

16. What are you and your child doing to solve this problem?(Please be specific) _____

II. What services did you use for your child in the last year?

The items in this section are about what services your adopted child has used and what your family has used in order to care for your child over the past 12 months.

Place a number beside each one as follows:

17. Special education programs _____

18. Medical services (beyond ordinary well-child care) _____

19. Handicapped aids (like wheelchairs, hearing aids, etc) _____

20. Money-other than the monthly subsidy from DCFS _____

21. A group to talk with (for adoptive parents, adopted children or siblings) _____

22. Family counseling (counseling for parents and child together) _____

23. Respite care (someone to care for your adopted child so you can get away) _____

24. Outpatient mental health services _____

25. Inpatient mental health services _____

26. Substance abuse help (alcohol or drugs) _____

27. Legal help (not counting getting the child adopted) _____

28. Day care or after-school care _____

29. Things for the child to do after school or in the summer (sports, clubs, etc.) _____

30. Other (please specify) _____

31. Overall, how satisfied are you with the services you have received for your adopted child? _____

-
32. If you received adoption assistance monies or service for DCFS in the past 12 months, how helpful were these to your family? _____
-
33. Please use the space below to make suggestions on how to improve services for adopted children and their families _____
-

III. What problems have you had with services for your adopted child?

The following questions will help us understand the problems that you face when seeking services for your adopted child.

Place a number beside each question as follows:

1. Rarely or none of the time
2. A little of the time
3. Some of the time
4. A good part of the time
5. Most of the time

34. My child won't go to counseling _____
35. The available services are offered by a religious group other than my own. _____
36. There are racial or ethnic problems with the services available. _____
37. Transportation is a problem _____
38. Services are not available at the right time. _____
39. My family won't go for counseling. _____
40. I don't know what services are available to me. _____
41. I don't know where the right service is located. _____
42. The people who are supposed to help don't understand our problems _____
43. I have too many other things which I already must do. _____
44. I don't have confidence in the people who are supposed to help me _____
45. My adopted child's needs are so special that I can't find the right service. _____
46. Other (please specify) _____
-

IV. Family Information.

The questions below will enable us to make the right connection between your opinions and the services that are important to adoptive families.

47. How old is your adopted child about whom you are answering this questionnaire? (Specify)

_____ Years _____ Months

48. When was the child first placed in your home? (Specify)

Month Year

49. When was the adoption of this child legally completed? (Specify)

Month Year

50. What is your child's ethnic background? (Circle Number)

1. Asian/Pacific Islander
2. Black
3. Hispanic
4. Native American
5. White
6. Other (specify) _____

51. What is your child's sex?

1. Male
2. Female

52. What is your child's religious affiliation?

1. (Specify) _____
2. None

53. Does your adopted child have a major disability?

1. Yes (Specify) _____
2. No

54. Who is completing this questionnaire?

1. Adoptive mother
2. Adoptive father
3. Other (Specify) _____

55. How old were you on your last birthday? _____ Years

56. What is your ethnic background?

1. Asian/Pacific Islander
2. Black
3. Hispanic
4. Native American
5. White
6. Other (specify) _____

57. What is your religious affiliation?

1. (Specify) _____
2. None

58. What is your current marital status?

1. Never married
2. Married, only once
3. Married, more than once
4. Other (specify) _____

59. How many people currently live in your household?

1. Total number of persons
2. How many of these persons are children under the age of 18? _____

60. What is your education?

1. Highest grade completed _____
2. Diplomas or degrees received, if any _____

61. What is your zip code? _____
ZIP CODE

Please use the space below to give us any additional comments you may have. Thank you very much for your help in completing this questionnaire.

February 14, 2001

Dear Parent(s):

You did a wonderful thing when you adopted your child. Some of you tell us how hard it is to get good services for your child's special needs. We would like to expand services to better meet the needs of your child and other children. You can help us in planning for more services by telling us about your needs.

Your family was chosen at random to help us. Your participation is voluntary and confidential.

Fill out the enclosed survey form. It will take about fifteen minutes. Mail it to the DHS/DCFS Adoption Services Unit in the enclosed self-addressed postage paid envelope. You do not have to identify yourself.

Please complete and mail your survey form back by **Friday March 2, 2001**.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 501-682-8462.

Thank you so much for the time and care you have given your child and thank you in advance for the time you spend on the survey.

Sincerely,

Gloria Aboagye, LCSW
Manager,
Adoption Services Unit

Cc: file